

~~SECRET~~



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

24 March 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Major General Robert E. Pursley, USAF
Military Assistant
Office of the Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT : Secretary Laird's Request

1. Outlined below are topics or specific items on which we need clarification or additional data in order to handle the net assessment task Secretary Laird has asked us to undertake.

2. One area raised in your 14 March 1972 memo on which we urgently need clarification and amplification is that of residual U.S. force levels and certain related matters. Given the Secretary's own time requirements, which set our deadline, we would appreciate enlightenment on the following matters as soon as possible. Some of these involve judgment as much as (or more than) actual data. In such cases, since time constraints do not allow for the preparation of detailed input studies, we would be more than satisfied with some knowledgeable officer's best professional opinion and would much rather have that quickly than wait for a detailed, formal study.

A. What B-52 sortie rate should be projected?

B. What U.S. Tactical Air and Naval sortie rates should be projected? And how many U.S. military personnel would be located in South Vietnam associated with this mission?

What are and what should we project as the air defenses protecting northern South Vietnam from MIG incursions?

Sec Def has seen

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

- C. What U.S. helicopter sortie rates should be projected and how will these be broken down geographically and by type of mission?
- D. To meet the assumption that direct U.S. military support should be projected to decline, we will assume that no U.S. combat troops will be available. Assuming three low U.S. personnel levels, say 10,000, 20,000 and 40,000 man levels, how would they probably be apportioned amongst the following missions?
 - 1. Combat support by type
 - 2. Combat service support by type
 - 3. Air transport
 - 4. Advisory systems
 - 5. Self support and headquarters
 - 6. Process of deactivating and shipping U.S. equipment.

3. In addition there are a number of other areas for which we need more information. Given deadline pressures, such information will have to be that contained in already produced reports, studies, and memoranda if we are to receive it in time for consideration in our assessment.

- A. What is the capability of the North Vietnamese Air Force to expand in the short run? That is, to acquire and operate attack aircraft outside North Vietnam's borders over the next year or two.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

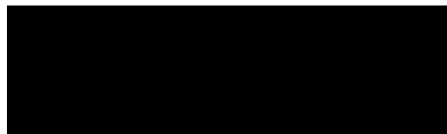
- B. Vietnamization plans and programs over the next year, including those in being and being considered. Most of our questions here could probably be answered if we could get a copy of NSDM 118 plus any subsequent changes therein or progress re parts related thereto.
1. Organizational changes such as the activation of the second 175 mm battalion and the current consideration of an additional helicopter squadron for MR2, etc.
 2. Performance and operational levels such as planned Vietnamese fixed and rotary wing sortie levels by type and by MR.
 3. Are there any plans for training and equipping VNAF for a quick-reaction air superiority role?
- C. VNAF Status Review, a periodical published by the U.S. Air Force. We would like to be placed on distribution.
- D. Studies or reports assessing the quality of VNAF operations by type.
- E. Recent reports assessing ARVN units and operations. The MR or division level advisors probably provide COMUS MACV with some such reports on a regular basis.
- F. Operational flying restrictions for B-52's, gunships, and other aircraft -- in particular, in what areas are aircraft unable to operate because of the high threat from enemy air defense?

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

- G. What portion of in-country transport sorties (by type of aircraft) flown in support of ARVN are flown by U.S. pilots? What is planned over the next year? This information is essential in order to project VNAF capability for assuming the primary responsibility for the movement of troops and supplies in-country. The same information is required with respect to ARVN ground (and water-borne) transport capability.
- H. Will residual U.S. forces over the next year be largely employed in assisting ARVN improve its logistical capability?
- I. What are the major shortcomings of the ARVN in-country logistical support capability?

4. I know the above requests collectively amount to a tall order; but then, so too does the Secretary's request to us. Any assistance you can render on the above will help us better serve him. Please do not wait until you have a total package assembled; but, instead, please ship me whatever you can as it becomes available.



25X1A9a

Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

~~SECRET~~